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In the Field

Caring for animals in the pasture: the children.
Plowing: the father or oldest son.
Sowing: the father or oldest son.
Hoeing the corn: unmarried daughter or housewife.
Harvesting the grain: the whole family.
Threshing the grain: the whole family.
Saving the seed for next year: no one in particular.

At the Market

Selling butter, eggs, poultry, vegetables: the housewife.
Selling sheep, pigs, and other animals: the men.
Buying the necessities from Sofia: the men.
Buying necessities in the village: the women and children.
Keeping the cash box: the father; in rare cases, the mother.

●857 883 It can be seen that children as well as the adults shared in this specialization of labor. The chief occupation of those below sixteen was the care of the animals. During the pasturing season these children spent more time in the fields than in the village. Because their pastures joined they were able to get together for group games and still keep a watchful eye upon their animals. The work they were called upon to do was not dangerous, but it was time consuming. Many famous men who grew up in the villages looked back upon this pastoral experience as a childhood heaven-on-earth. Some of the old men, recalling the days when the large joint families *(zadrugi)* still existed, told of being sent with the animals up the mountains a long way from the village. For a month they were absent, seeing no one but a few strangers who happened to pass by. But those distant pastures were no longer available to the peasants, so they kept their animals (and children) close to the village.

464 Whether this seems exploitation or not is a matter of definition, but custom did decree that there should be no idle hands in the village economy, even to the extent of keeping small children occupied. To be sure, the attitude toward labor was changing, but the love of the land persisted, and owning land meant working that land, at least in

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591 562 If a daughter failed to marry, she spent the rest of her life in her father's home and received sympathy only as long as her mother was alive. Her father and married brothers thought of her as a servant in the home and treated her accordingly. Fortunately there was rarely more than one old maid at a time in Dragalevtsy.

593 855 562 The treatment of younger children, of course, varied greatly with the home. Children in Dragalevtsy were accustomed to being yelled at from their first toddling days by displeased older people. As we have already seen, there was no question about boys being preferred to girls in most homes, especially if there was only one boy among several girls. In such homes it was the boy who received the presents when the father returned from town, and who was picked up first; it was the boy whom the parents held when they asked to be photographed.

[861] Whipping, which was usually done by the father, was such an effective check on misbehavior that parents often needed only to threaten it. Another method of punishment was to withhold bread from the child for two or three hours, but, as one father said, "This doesn't always work, especially if the child begins to cry."

[357] Some parents, when they were unable to make ends meet, sent a girl off to Sofia to work as a domestic. One family revealed that five years previously a twelve-year-old daughter had been sent to be a servant in Sofia; she would never return to the village to live, nor did she ever come to visit. In this case the parents could not support an extra person, so chose the simplest way out. The fact that many Bulgarian families in cities sought female servants from twelve to eighteen years of age made such a practice possible. Indeed, on St. Dimiter's Day (November 8) and St. George's Day (May 6) there used to be a "servant bazaar" in Sofia. Village girls went to a certain place and stood in a row where housewives could look them over like heifers and choose a maid. Changes in servants, including shepherds, were ordinarily made only at these two times during the year.

593 857 Should parents find a job for a teen-aged boy, the father might require the boy to accept the job. Most boys wanted work; only a few resented working at all. If a father had more sons than he needed on the farm, he sometimes chose a trade for or with the boy. Such

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boys usually became cobblers, tailors, or tanners. In all cases where the sons remained to work in the village, they were expected to turn over to the father a part or all of their earnings. This practice once more emphasized the economic importance of children.

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As far as I could discover, none of the villagers resented my questions into their personal affairs. More than once, after the routine interviewing was over, a man unburdened himself of some hurt or grievance that revealed more than any questionnaire could. It was through such outpourings that I realized how land could dominate or warp completely otherwise normal family relationships of father and sons or brother and brother.

Lonely old Bai Dimiter held especial interest for me since his wife had earlier told about incidents in his past which helped me to understand better why he began to drink so much that his girls felt ashamed of being called his daughters; to see how he bore his loss of economic and social position in the village owing to bad business methods coupled with a disabling accident. The key to the whole situation was the fact that his own father had tricked him in his early married days. After the son had paid off a heavy debt owed by his father, the father refused to deed him meadows in return but frankly confessed: "I fooled you in order to get money." To make the deception harder to bear, Dimiter inherited no land from his father, all of it going to another son with whom the father had been on better terms. Naturally, Dimiter had a falling out with his brother, and took the matter to the courts where, after long litigation, he failed to obtain any part of the inheritance.

The books I had read about Bulgaria in the old days pointed out the role the older brother formerly played when the father died. One village home was actually operated on the old principle of subordination of the younger brother to the older. Hristo, the older brother, was smaller than the younger brother, standing huge and stooped in the low-ceilinged room in such a way that the kerosene lamp cast a grotesque, mountainous shadow behind him. I knew, of course, about these men, as I knew about most village men, from the talk of tavern groups and other willing informants. I knew that they were ashamed of their family name which meant "the son of a donkey," and I knew

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593 Although this insight into the relations between parents and their children, both adult and immature, has taken us beyond the period of childhood, it does show us why the children had to learn obedience and respect and why the village would soon show its dissatisfaction with anyone who flouted the established rules. Children also learned to defer to an older brother or sister, and assumed responsibility for those who were younger. In the main, a child's life was centered about the home and about those activities which he shared with members of his immediate family or the relatives in the neighborhood who were young enough to be his playmates.

527 574 Children became acquainted with their relatives in other villages on the annual *Subor* or "At Home Day" which each village observed. Dragalevtsy families had four village *Subori* which they could attend; on Pantaley Den (August 9) they could go to Boyana; on Spasov Den (the Monday of the eighth week after Easter) they could go to Durvenitsa; on Petkov Den (October 27) they could visit Bistritsa; and on Archangel Day (November 21) they could visit Simeonovo.

I once attended this Simeonovo *Subor* with the Dragalevtsy families. I was told gravely by the old women that on this day everyone must be especially good, for the Archangel Michael was the one who received the souls of the dead into heaven. On the day preceding, the Simeonovo women had gathered to make many loaves of bread from flour previously donated to the church by its loyal supporters. Early on the morning of the *Subor* the church sexton with some helpers killed four sheep for the big meat stews; later he gave terse commands regarding the flavoring of the stews: bean and mutton, cabbage and mutton, and rice and mutton—a somewhat monotonous menu, but one hallowed by tradition.

We started our four-mile walk at an early hour. The air was crisp and so clear that the great Balkan range, miles across the plain, stood out sharply in its rose and blue. By midmorning a large number of people, including the children, had come into the churchyard. Most of them entered the church and attended part of the service; the women carried bread and boiled corn to be blessed by the priest, who received a portion. At noon, the church service was concluded and the priest blessed the meal prepared under the auspices of the church. Then it

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was that a few hundred people—guests, villagers, and total strangers—partook of the common meal. This dinner was typical. There was wine in abundance, for, as a member of the financial committee told me, wine induced a generous spirit in the hearts of those making their annual pledges to the church. After the meal and the pledges, the crowd dispersed. Visitors went home with family groups for further eating and drinking. The village square became a kaleidoscope of colors when peasant boys and girls began to dance the stately *horo* to the music of the pipes and drums.

With the coming of evening the guests left the village. Simeonovo moved again through a period of quiet and almost unbroken monotony until Archangel Day next year. Of course Christmas and Easter brought celebrations, but not the dash and gaiety that the presence of several hundred outsiders invariably created.

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In spite of these set occasions for visiting, a surprising number of Dragalevtsy people stayed put, at least as far as going to other villages was concerned. *(See Appendix V.)* They had business in Sofia, and could justify going there. But almost half of the *stopani* never went to another village, even though there were four villages within five miles of Dragalevtsy. The same held true for their wives, the *domakini*. But those that did take such trips usually let their children go along, at least on some of the visits. These proved to be gala events in the lives of the youngsters.

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In addition to the commemoration of Christmas and Easter and the celebration of St. George's Day, described in the last chapter,[1] there were other holidays during the year which interested the children as much if not more than they did the adults. On the few summer holidays the villagers avoided any strenuous field work; since most of the special days came in the winter it was simple enough "to remember the holiday and take it easy." If the people found it necessary to do some important job on a holiday, they had a precedent set by no less a personage than St. Peter himself. On his own name day (July 12) he saw that the grain needed harvesting, so he took a piece of hearth cake in one hand and a sickle in the other and went to work reaping his wheat "so that the ripe grains wouldn't fall to the ground."

1 [Cf. pp. 106-111, category 116--Analyst]

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527 This was the peasant version of the Sabbath being made for man, not
● 857 man for the Sabbath.

One holiday which children particularly enjoyed was New Year's Day, which, like Christmas, came two weeks later than our own because of the Old Style Calendar still in use by the church. Boys and girls were up at break of day to tap every passer-by with a gaily decorated branch of a cornel cherry tree. As they tapped they chanted:

[539]

Fresh, fresh New Year
Happiness to the end.
Let mother and father be healthy
Like the past year!

Striking with a cornel-twig higher than the cap;
Wishing you a houseful of corn,
Yellow as the gold,
To ripen early, early in
The fields during the summer.

Let wedding guests again pass by
With full wine casks
To present us with white kerchiefs
And embroidered belts.

Fresh, fresh New Year,
Let us get sister married! . . .

With this chant they wished good health. In return they expected
[777] a coin or something to eat. This tapping continued until nightfall. Most members of the family looked sleepy during the day because they had stayed up late the night before to gamble. Their success or failure on New Year's Eve was supposed to foretell what luck the new year had in store.

Early in the morning the older boys and girls told fortunes by gathering around a copper kettle in which each one had placed some identifying article, such as a ring or knife. The group sang a song, connected with some occupation, while one token was drawn from the pot. If a boy's token was drawn, the occupation described would be his; if a girl's token was drawn, then she would marry a man engaged in that occupation. After this they all danced the *horo*.

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Epiphany or Bogoyavlenie on January 19 commemorated the baptism of Christ. The Dragalevtsy boys and girls knew how the day was celebrated in other villages near the rivers or the sea. There the altar cross was thrown into the icy water. Naked youths dove in and struggled violently for it. The winner, carrying the cross, then collected money from the crowd. More important even than the money was the feeling that he would be fortunate during the coming year. But Epiphany did not pass unnoticed in Dragalevtsy, even though the river was nothing more than a racing mountain brook. The priest brought the cross out to sell at auction. The buyer, of course, returned it to the priest, but with his purchase received the assurance of God's blessing in the days to come. One year, a hiker happened to be passing through on his way up to the top of Vitosha. He saw the crowd gathered around the priest, bought the cross, went to the tavern for a free drink, returned the cross to the priest, and went on his way up the mountain. Peasants marveled for some time afterwards over the dispatch he showed in the whole affair.

Formerly on this day, children were christened with cold instead of lukewarm water, and all brides of that year were bathed in the river. When I asked why such custom was no longer practiced, Bai Angel, the village registrar, shrugged: "Oh, then the people were stronger and could stand such treatment."

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On the previous day the children had all awaited the priest's arrival to sprinkle holy water in every room of the house. As we have already seen, many families collected bottles of the water that had been especially blessed for Epiphany, in the belief that it would cure various illnesses later on.

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Bulgarian boys and girls never celebrated their birthdays. Instead, they made much of their name days. Each child bore the name of some saint, with a special day on the church calendar. Each Ivan (John) celebrated on the day following Epiphany, January 20; each Grigor (Gregory) on February 7; each Iliya (Elijah) on August 2. And so it ran throughout the year. Those with names not appearing on the calendar generally chose the day of "The Forty Holy Martyrs." Whereas Americans would expect to receive gifts on their birthdays, Bulgarians, especially those who were married, expected to entertain

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"Studying their lessons in the pasture while tending the sheep . . ."
See page 117.

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Dragalevtsy families on their way to a *Subor* in Simeonovo.
See page 124.

[Facing p. 128]

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and provide food and drink for their friends on their name days. Children had to grow into the many practices surrounding holidays just as they had to grow into understanding of how to become a good farmer. It took some time to learn, for example, that on September 11, the Day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, one should have nothing to do with objects colored red. That color symbolized blood and guilt. On the first of March, however, red was very much in evidence. In the cities the young people exchange *martenitsi*, equivalent to our Valentines. This day was popularly called *Baba Marta* or "Old Woman March," because the weather during March was changeable and whimsical.

Although the villagers themselves paid little attention to the patriotic holidays which had been started within the past few decades, children welcomed them, for they meant a variation in the school routine. Schoolteachers would never think of letting a patriotic holiday go by without some special exercises. Among such holidays were those commemorating the liberation of Bulgaria, the King's birthday, the King's name day, the King's ascension to the throne. A special holiday for students was also becoming firmly rooted. It was the one honoring the missionary brothers, St. Cyril and St. Methodius, who were the patron saints of learning.

These holidays, both religious and patriotic, were often the occasion for relatives to come to the village. The buses, mysteriously held together in places by baling wire, chugged up the hill to the square to disgorge their load of people and grotesque bundles. Children crowded around to greet the newcomers and merrily skipped beside them as they walked toward the house. However, one-third of the homes had *no* visitors from outside the village during the year. Many of the visitors were originally from Dragalevtsy. A record of one year's migrants, twenty-one in all, showed that six had married outsiders and settled elsewhere; four had gone as soldiers, four as students, two as laborers, and the rest as cabmen, watchmen, and a coffeehouse proprietor.

All these holidays meant much to the children: exciting food, observance of age-old customs, and the arrival of guests. A few holidays were of special importance to godparents and godchildren. On

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"Boys and girls were up at break of day to tap every passer-by with a gaily decorated branch of a cornel cherry tree." *See page 126.*

[facing p. 129]

Epiphany the godparent went to the home of his godchild, poured water on him or, in a rare case, pushed him into the river for the sake of his health during the coming year. On Cheese Sunday, however, the godchild went to his godparent's home with a gift and begged forgiveness for all sins committed during the year. On certain other holidays and special occasions the godchild was also supposed to pay his respects. 608 527 857

Some features of this bond between godparent and godchild were strange to one unfamiliar with the Orthodox Church. Behavior in the presence of godparents was highly formalized and correct. A person would not lie to his godparent; nor was he supposed ever to swear in his godparent's presence. These customs emphasized the mystical spiritual union which was supposed to exist between godparent and godchild. 608

Because the office of the godparent was hereditary, the same family provided godparents for the members of another family for generations. Consequently a feeling of strong relationship had come about. A godparent was considered one of the closest of relatives. "The godfather is closer than an uncle, and the godmother is closer than an aunt," the peasants used to say. Children of the two families could not marry even though madly in love, because, in the sight of the village, they were related. The taboo against marriage into the family of the mother's godparents further complicated matters. A woman, upon marriage, adopted the godparent of her husband, who assumed the same responsibility to the children of that couple as he did to the father. If a godparent was called upon to officiate at a wedding or a christening and was unable to attend, he could send one of his children to perform in his stead. [582]

We have already seen the part that the godparents *(kumove)* played in the wedding ceremony.[1] The rite of christening revealed even more of the relationship between godparent and his spiritual ward. He went with a friend or relative to the infant's home, some two or three Sundays after its birth, and took it to the church. He had previously discussed the child's name with the parents and usually followed their wishes, but had the right to give the child any name he thought proper. In the case of the first son he was apt to follow the 608 553 851

[1] [See p. 89, category 116 -- Analyst]

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(secondary school) education, found no work in Sofia, and came back to farm his land. The fact that he could survey his fields, keep his accounts, and do various other things more quickly and efficiently than his unschooled neighbors, had made him a living example of the benefits of education, as far as the Dragalevtsy farmers were concerned.

I had often heard both Bulgarians and foreigners say that children in Bulgarian villages did not know how to play. Though such a statement accurately describes the past, it was certainly becoming less true because of the growing influence of the school. Nevertheless, with the exception of certain games played in the pastures, children's group games were new to the village.

The older people said that fifty years ago there were almost no games; even these few were played only by men and boys while the women and girls always carried their knitting needles or distaffs with them. "The women sang while they worked and that was their game. The lonely shepherd boy had his *kaval* [flute]." Most of the old people had absolutely no recollection of games they played when young, which probably accounted for their unfriendly attitude toward children's games. One laconic old *baba* snapped: "The children throw stones at one another for a game."

There was much difference of opinion among the adults as to just what the children did in their playtime and with whom they played. A young man told me that children played together even if the families were unfriendly, but an older woman insisted that parents completely controlled their children's choice of playmates. The simplest way of getting at the truth was to talk to the children themselves. The children were used to seeing me and were uniformly friendly, often running to meet me as I came up the lane from the meadows. I had photographed many of them and knew their parents, so it was easy to get them to talk.

One solemn little group of five girls told me they were playing, which I took to mean that they were at leisure for the moment, for they were simply sitting on the ground by the stream trickling down the village street.

"What do you play?"

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"Oh, we play 'woman's work' and talk about the cattle, school, and such things."

"Don't you ever play with dolls?" I ventured, for only one of the group was as old as thirteen. Five pairs of black eyes looked at me seriously.

"Some of us have never had dolls, and now we are much too old."

Shocked exclamations greeted my last question, when I asked if they ever quarreled.

"Never, for we are neighbors, and share our bread, and play together every day."

Borislav, Ivan, and Boris (one thirteen-year-old and two eleven-year-olds) were an entertaining triumvirate. The father of Borislav was a streetcar conductor in Sofia and often took his son to the city. On one of these trips, the boy had seen Sofia children rolling hoops. When Borislav got back to the village, he showed his cronies how to make and play with hoops. The boys said they shared food as well as toys, and helped one another with work. Ivan had to work a great deal, which curtailed their games considerably. When I asked this group if there was any fighting, the boys grinned.

"We fight with the other boys because they make fun of us when we don't know our lessons."

"What about fighting among you three?" I persisted.

"Well," said Borislav frankly, "we have to beat Ivan once in a while because when we fight for fun to see who is strongest and Ivan wins, he boasts, and then we have to fight him seriously." (Boris told me later in private that he didn't like Ivan very much, but "I take him as a friend so as not to be without any one.")

While I was sitting on the curbing near the fountain with the three boys, a tiny, six-year-old girl wandered up. I asked her if she ever played with boys. The thin little braids bobbed vigorously up and down for the Bulgarian "no," as she gave the universal reason, "My mother doesn't let me."

All the children to whom I talked agreed that it was more fun for boys and girls to play separately. (Seven-year-old Mara did play with Peter, but only, she assured me earnestly, because she had no one

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else in the neighborhood.) It was also better to play with relatives because "one doesn't quarrel so much." The boys in general liked to play in the schoolyard "because one meets one's friends from outside the neighborhood there." One brown-skinned imp in ragged hand-me-downs said that "Lots of us play near the school because our parents cannot see us and call us to work." Both boys and girls said that the teachers showed them many games which they still played in the summer.

The children of Dragalevtsy seldom acted out stories or dramas which they had seen portrayed in books or in a *vecherinka* (entertainment). The boys did almost no tree-climbing because there were few trees in the village large enough. All the climbing that was done was "for work," to get nuts or fruit. Games with balls or marbles were brought to the village by students going daily into Sofia to one of the higher schools. The group games of a formal nature requiring ten or fifteen children were learned in the village school and were usually played in the schoolyard. Some of the most popular children's games were the following:

Na svinkya (Playing swine). Several boys hit a wooden ball into holes with the use of clubs knotted at the end. There was a boy guarding each hole and one in the center. The idea was to get the ball into the hole. This was a peasant form of golf and was one of the oldest games played by Bulgarian villagers. It was the special favorite of boys who were keeping the animals in the pastures.

Sus kukla (With a doll). Some people estimated that one out of every six little girls had a doll, while others maintained that the number was nearer three out of six. There were no statistics on this subject, but playing with dolls was uncommon enough to make it a source of great joy to children who did so. Some of the dolls were very crude and ugly, though many parents were buying western dolls in the market to bring home.

Na Tsiganeta (Playing gypsies). Since every boy caring for animals carried a stick, it was natural that a game using this stick originated. The game called for the contestants to bounce their stick from one end to the other in rapid succession, much as one would "skip" a rock on the surface of water. The stick might jump five or

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●857 524 six times before falling motionless. The least skillful contestant received a beating from the others.

Na machuklin (In New England called "Peggy"). Consisted chiefly of tapping the end of a small stick so that it would rise into the air to be hit again before it fell to the ground.

Na Kokumish. This was a form of tag played by children sitting around in a circle.

Na gonenitsa (Form of running tag). The one to be "it" *(gogan)* was chosen by "counting out" with the use of the following poem, which corresponded to "eeny, meeny, miney, mo":

[539]

Ala bala nitsa,
Turska panit:a,
E, gidi Dancho,
Nash kapitancho.

Ala bala nitsa,
A Turkish plate,
Hey, you Dancho,
Our leader.

The children when counting out spit on their fingers. The *gogan* would run and try to touch the others.

Na zhmish (Hide and seek). The one who was "it" said the following poem while the others hid:

[539]

Dve vrabcheta
Se skaraka
Na Popovota vrata.
Pop izleza i im kazva
Ish, pish, tish, stesh, mish.

Two sparrows
Quarreled
At the Priest's gate.
The Priest came out and told them
Ish, pish, tish, stesh, mish.

After he said this he went to hunt the others. Wherever he found anyone he spit in the place where he was. The others tried to run to the homebase and spit there before he did.

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Kosharki (Sheep folds). This was a game which had been played extensively a generation ago, but its use was dying out in the village. The children would build miniature sheep folds, houses, and fences out of rocks. This game corresponded after a fashion to our building with blocks.

The outstanding characteristic of all these games was that they required little equipment and few participants. At home, the play groups were inevitably restricted to the family and nearest neighbors, often relatives. At school, children could choose relatives and other children in the same grade. Play groups in the fields were formed on the basis of family ownership of land and common pasture. These latter groups often gathered in the village and went to the fields together, the youngsters carrying loaves of bread, baked peppers, and fresh tomatoes. Even in play, the family was important, for every type of play group almost automatically included relatives. As was previously pointed out, there was less quarreling among the children who were related. I often heard: "You shouldn't hit him; he's your relative."

The new types of play were still limited. The radio, comic papers, and movies were almost unknown to the village child, just as they were to the average adult. Only twenty-five newspapers reached the village daily, and these had few comic strips. Magazines and books were a rarity. Sofia bookshops had some exquisite children's books, but I never saw one in the village. Sometimes when I came into a village home on a winter evening, I would see an unforgettable picture. Near the fire the father sat quietly, elbows on knees, the mother was spinning near the one dim electric bulb, and in the center, crouched at the low table, a boy, nine or ten years old, was laboriously reading some fragment of a periodical to his parents. Their pride and pleasure was unspoken but obvious.

There was one radio in the village, and the children were of course conscious of it as it blared incessantly in Renaissance Square, but it was not a part of their life, any more than the movies or trains. Only 45 per cent of the total population, including babies, had ever attended a movie, and less than 40 per cent had ever been on a train.

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[369] With Sofia, a city of over a quarter million people, only five miles away, the ability of the villagers to resist, however passively, the influence of the "people of the world" was astonishing. It was a remoteness, not to be measured in miles, but in generations.

Such pleasant customs as keeping pets were almost nonexistent. The tiny puppies with which the children sometimes rolled were bred for strictly utilitarian purposes, to guard the sheep, and were taught to be unfriendly to man.

[888] The very young and the very old in the village spent much time together. When I was taken to pay my respects to the oldest man in the village, a venerable figure of over a century, we found him sitting in a sunny corner of the yard under a gnarled pine tree. Tumbling around him were half a dozen tiny children, somewhat hampered in their movements by their clumsy, heavy clothing but very proud to show off their ancient relative.

The older children derived a quiet amusement from their position as spectators at the village ceremonies. There were always little boys making merry along the path of a wedding procession or tramping along wide-eyed beside a funeral. At *Subori* and *hora* mischievous little boys were ubiquitous. The little girls stayed solemnly by their mothers; only their eyes wandered, alternately solemn and amused. The village child had no routine planned for him, either for his physical or his psychological needs. There was no emphasis upon self-expression for the child, only upon conformity to the routine of the family.

858 593 Yet there was warmth and affection for the children. When a child died, the tempo of the household perceptibly slackened. "It is God's will. It is Kismet [Fate]," the family said, but the father grew more taciturn and the mother wept silently as she spun in the evenings. And when a funeral procession reached the cemetery, the new mourners often found there other mothers who had lost their children. These wailed again for the long-departed and begged the spirit of the newly dead to carry messages to their babies.

And when a family grew rich according to village standards, it was on the children that gifts were lavished, perhaps a wish-fulfillment by the elders inherited from their own drab childhood.

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The irrepressible fun of childhood could break through even the hard crust of conformity to village life. The older villagers might suspect and even condemn the amusements of the "people of the world," as they did the trouser-clad women skiers who streamed through the square on winter week ends. The youngsters were different. As I was leaving the tavern one February afternoon I saw a pigskin-sandaled urchin, seven or eight years old, attempting to go down the hill on a crude pair of homemade skis. The snow was thin and he stuck fast in the mud. He took off his skis, put them on his back, and started up the steep slope to try again, and again.

"Hey, there, what have you got?" I called. The answer was a sly smile and a revealing comment: "Skis, like the 'people of the world.'"